

BEFORE THE
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

- - - - -
JOINT APPLICATION OF WISCONSIN ELECTRIC) Docket No.
POWER COMPANY AND WISCONSIN GAS LLC FOR)
AUTHORITY TO ADJUST ELECTRIC, NATURAL) 5-UR-110
GAS, AND STEAM RATES)
- - - - -

EXAMINER MICHAEL NEWMARK, PRESIDING

Tr. 1-66

PUBLIC SESSION

**CERTIFIED
ORIGINAL**

Reported By:

DEBBIE A. HARNEN, RPR
Halma Reporting Group
(414) 271-4466

HEARING HELD:

September 28, 2022

VIA ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE

1:00 p.m.

1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

2 1:00 p.m.

3 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Well, good afternoon,
4 everyone. This is Docket 5-UR-110, the Joint
5 Application of Wisconsin Electric Power Company
6 and Wisconsin Gas, LLC, for Authority to Adjust
7 Electric, Natural Gas and Steam Rates.

8 This is Michael Newmark, the
9 Administrative Law Judge for the PSC, and we're
10 here for the first of three -- or four, actually,
11 public sessions we're going to be holding in this
12 hearing.

13 So we're here to take public
14 comments in the case. We are also taking public
15 comments -- besides the live sessions, we're also
16 taking public comments in writing. I'm just going
17 to turn the chime off. Just off the record for a
18 second.

19 (Discussion off the record.)

20 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So we're taking
21 public comments in writing, as well as these live
22 sessions, and I'm just going to switch to our most
23 recent notice here, our second notice. It lists
24 the deadline for written comments is now Monday,
25 November 7th. So we'll accept those either

1 through the Commission's website or by U.S. Mail.

2 We have, I believe, 58 comments
3 filed so far, and I wanted to mention while we're
4 here that typically we don't allow -- we don't
5 provide access to the comments, to the online
6 comment system until the Notice of Hearing is
7 issued.

8 We actually jumped the gun on that
9 and so we did open the public comment period
10 before the Notice of Hearing was issued; but have
11 no fear, I'll accept all those comments that were
12 filed prior to the Notice of Hearing coming out,
13 even though it's not our typical process to do so.
14 So I'll take all 58 comments. Haven't reviewed
15 them yet, but as long as they're appropriate
16 comments, I'll accept those for the record. I'm
17 not going to reject anything because of the timing
18 of the filing. So I just wanted to make sure
19 everyone understood.

20 So we'll be here today at 1:00 p.m.
21 and 6:00 p.m., and we'll also be taking evidence
22 from the parties on October 5th starting at
23 10:00 a.m., and we'll do that over Zoom as well.
24 So it's going to be the same connection.

25 In addition, we're going to be

1 meeting in person on November 3rd at 2:00 p.m. and
2 6:00 p.m. at the Washington Park Senior Center.

3 So we'll take additional comments at that time.

4 So at this point, I just want to
5 give a brief introduction of our process. We can
6 go off the record for this.

7 (Discussion off the record.)

8 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Let's get on the
9 record then, and I'm going to swear you in. So
10 raise your right hand.

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 DON FERBER, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So state your name

3 for the record, and please give us your comment.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MR. FERBER: My name is Don Ferber. I

6 live in Madison, Wisconsin.

7 I'm testifying because I'm

8 concerned that We Energies' high rate increases

9 would unfairly and disproportionately harm

10 low-income customers, many who already pay high

11 fixed fees and that these rate increases should

12 be far lower than what We Energies is asking

13 for.

14 I'm concerned also because these

15 proposed increases would be in addition to a

16 recent report that home heating costs in

17 Wisconsin will increase 17 percent this winter,

18 and that would likely be higher for low-income

19 residents who live in older, less efficient homes

20 and apartments.

21 The high cost that We Energies is

22 asking for rate increases based on are really as

23 a result primarily of We Energies' bad decisions

24 and reliance on fossil fuels that they continue

25 to promote over affordable clean energy

1 solutions.

2 First instance includes the Elm
3 Road generating station that has cost customers
4 dearly and also other fossil fuel infrastructure
5 they continue to support and build. This comes on
6 top of We Energies' reported record net income and
7 earnings per share in 2021 and 2022, while at the
8 same time many more customers were suffering from
9 high energy burdens and shutoffs.

10 It is the shareholders and
11 management that should absorb the risk from the
12 bad decisions, not the customers who the
13 utilities are supposed to be serving. For
14 instance, the chairman was given nearly a
15 \$3 million bonus in 2021, while arrearages
16 were escalating for many low-income customers
17 during the pandemic. This is from utility
18 information provided by the Public Service
19 Commission, and that's especially those
20 customers of We Energies.

21 These rate increases would likely
22 result in more shutoffs next April when the
23 moratorium ends from these high rates.
24 We Energies already has a very high number of
25 customers with payment arrearages, again, from the

1 statistics that were provided to the PSC.

2 And I wanted to mention that in
3 Michigan one trial to reduce customer costs was
4 found to actually increase customers keeping up
5 with payments which eliminates some of the
6 problems both for the utilities and the customers.

7 We Energies should create energy
8 efficiency and weatherization programs to help
9 those with high energy burdens. This would
10 provide more equity and reduce demand and
11 emissions. There should also be added funding
12 solutions to help ratepayers who are at risk from
13 these payments and the problems that result
14 thereof.

15 It just seems to me there's
16 something inherently wrong when utilities' wealth
17 and customers -- excuse me -- the shareholders and
18 the management wealth increases while customers
19 are continuing to suffer even more.

20 We need to create more equitable
21 energy systems for everyone, starting with
22 reducing the rate hike proposals We Energies has
23 asked for, decrease the fixed fees that customers
24 are paying and provide funding and solutions
25 targeted at the vulnerable and those most in

1 need.

2 Thank you very much.

3 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Great. Thanks
4 very much. Maybe you've inspired some more
5 comments. Let's see.

6 Next one on our list is Elizabeth
7 Ward.

8 MS. WARD: I'm just listening, but thank
9 you.

10 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Oh, all right.
11 Thanks.

12 Holly McCoy.

13 MS. McCOY: Thank you. I'd like to make
14 a comment.

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Excellent. So let's
16 get on the record, and I'll swear you in. So
17 raise your right hand.

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 HOLLY McCOY, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Just give us your
3 name and then your comment.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MS. McCOY: Sure. So my name is Holly
6 McCoy, and I'm just here today to thank
7 We Energies for being such a huge supporter of the
8 Milwaukee community especially in a philanthropic
9 system.

10 We Energies has been a huge
11 supporter of my organization, Literacy Services of
12 Wisconsin, since 1978. We do adult education and
13 adult literacy; and currently about 25 percent of
14 Milwaukee County adults are reading at or below a
15 third grade level. So our work is incredibly
16 important.

17 And it also is really difficult for
18 us to find the support like what we receive from
19 We Energies. So we're really grateful for that.
20 So I just wanted to thank We Energies again for
21 their support of the community.

22 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Great. Thank you.

23 Next up we have someone who signed
24 in as iPad. It's the only one that signed in as
25 iPad, so you should know who you are.

1 Not hearing any response, we'll
2 move on. So the next person, Jackie Madsen, I'm
3 assuming that's our PSC Staff Jackie Madsen. Can
4 you just let us know for sure?

5 It looks like you got your
6 microphone unmuted, but I can't hear you. Just so
7 everyone knows, in case you do change your mind,
8 you didn't get a chance to comment, I'll let you
9 comment at the end.

10 So next person is Jadine.

11 JADINE: Hi. I'm just listening, but
12 thank you.

13 EXAMINER NEWMARK: How about Jim Piatt,
14 P-i-a-t-t. I'll need to unmute. I'll do that for
15 you.

16 You'd like to comment?

17 MR. PIATT: Good afternoon. I have one
18 comment, please.

19 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Let me
20 swear you in. Raise your right hand.

21

22

23

24

25

1 JIM PIATT, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Name, please,
3 and comment.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MR. PIATT: Jim Piatt, president of
6 Messmer Schools.

7 I want to thank the We Energies
8 foundation also for long-term substantial support
9 for our students at three schools, who are largely
10 from neighborhoods like Harambee, Merrill Park and
11 the 53206 zip code, many of Milwaukee's most
12 impoverished neighborhoods.

13 Our work to provide quality
14 education in K-12 basic literacy and math
15 development and character formation and
16 produce good citizens has been greatly aided by
17 We Energies Foundation for years, and I'm grateful
18 for that. Thank you.

19 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Thanks a lot.

20 Next we have Jordan Green. Would
21 you like to comment?

22 MS. GREEN: Yes. I would like to make a
23 comment.

24 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Any chance you can
25 put your video on?

1 MS. GREEN: I'm sorry. I don't have
2 access to video right now.

3 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. That's fine.
4 All right. So I'll swear you in. Raise your
5 right hand.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 JORDAN GREEN, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. So please
3 give us your name and your comment.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MS. GREEN: My name is Jordan Green, and
6 I'd like to make a comment concerning the proposed
7 rate hike from We Energies and just share that I'm
8 a Milwaukee County resident; and as I've learned
9 more about Milwaukee's historically redlined
10 neighborhoods, the race-based discriminatory
11 lending practices and housing policies at the
12 city, state and federal level that has made the
13 city one of the most segregated in the country, it
14 deeply concerns me to hear that the proposed rate
15 increases are going to disproportionately affect
16 black, Latinx, and other marginalized communities
17 in our city and throughout the state.

18 The inner core of Milwaukee County,
19 which is deeply segregated, as well as Ashland,
20 Wisconsin, are some of the most energy-burdened
21 communities in the state; and looking specifically
22 at Milwaukee, these energy-burdened communities
23 have -- currently already pay about 10 percent of
24 their annual income just going to utilities.

25 So taking that current reality and

1 looking at, you know, an 8 to 10 percent increase
2 in utility costs is going to force racialized and
3 historically marginalized communities to have to
4 choose between food, medicine, utilities, rent,
5 all of these things which are already unaffordable
6 as inflation rises; and as these communities are,
7 you know, forced to bear the burdens of racial
8 inequality and structural violence, this rate
9 increase is structural racism.

10 If we actually want to move towards
11 justice in our society, we cannot allow a rate
12 increase like this that is going to just further
13 racial and economic inequality in our communities.

14 And what I'm asking We Energies to
15 do is they're well aware of who the
16 energy-burdened communities in our society are. A
17 study was released recently, Energy Burden in
18 Milwaukee: Study Reveals Major Disparities and
19 Links to Redlined Areas. This is public
20 knowledge.

21 We Energies needs to do more than
22 pay lip service to what they already know about
23 these redlined communities and provide meaningful
24 restitution and reparations to these communities
25 because black and Latinx discriminated against

1 communities should not have to bear the brunt of
2 further investment into fossil fuel
3 infrastructure, which is what We Energies is
4 doing. Thank you.

5 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thanks very much.

6 And next on our list is Karl.

7 Would you like to comment? Okay. We'll move on
8 to Keviea Guiden, G-u-i-d-e-n.

9 MS. GUIDEN: Hello.

10 EXAMINER NEWMARK: You can correct me
11 for destroying your name.

12 MS. GUIDEN: You so butchered it.

13 EXAMINER NEWMARK: I couldn't get much
14 worse, right?

15 MS. GUIDEN: It's Wednesday, so we'll
16 stay well.

17 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Well, so
18 you'd like to comment. I'm going to swear you in.
19 Raise your right hand.

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 KEVIEA GUIDEN, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 MS. GUIDEN: I swear to tell the truth,
3 the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

4 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Well,
5 pronounce your name correctly and give us your
6 comment.

7 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

8 MS. GUIDEN: Keviea, K-e-v-i-e-a, for
9 the record, and it's Guiden, G-u-i-d-e-n.

10 Well, so what do I have to say? So
11 I am an energy burden organizer, and currently I
12 am a voice -- I am a very huge voice throughout
13 the north side and northwest side and some of
14 southeastern Wisconsin. I am a voice for a lot of
15 black, Latino, BIPOC folks. I live on the
16 northwest side as well.

17 I am just gonna do a small
18 piggyback piece about the disparities and
19 redlining and the segregation parts here in
20 Milwaukee that are known. And due to that, houses
21 aren't insulated, and the houses on the northwest
22 side and in the north side and some of
23 southeastern Wisconsin, by those houses not being
24 insulated, that --

25 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Can I interrupt just

1 a second? It seems like you're clicking
2 something, and it's kind of getting in the way of
3 hearing what you're saying.

4 Whatever the sound is coming on,
5 just try to --

6 MS. GUIDEN: So we're paying double the
7 rates as the ratepayers in the suburban and the
8 surrounding areas around Milwaukee.

9 And not only am I an advocate and I
10 am also organizing around the rate case itself, I
11 am currently -- I feel like I'm a poster child.
12 What do I mean by that? I have currently
13 experienced two shutoffs. So I do not understand
14 or neither know why or haven't been able to
15 communicate effectively with anyone from We
16 Energies.

17 I was shut off in the earlier parts
18 of August. They were asking for a \$600 rate, a
19 payment. Of course, I paid the \$600 payment. It
20 was a click of a button. They turned me back on.

21 So then here comes August -- no --
22 September 7, which is less than four weeks of me
23 being shut off. Now, keep in mind these billing
24 cycles have to come out as well. I was
25 disconnected again on September 7.

1 I currently have a bill here where
2 they have changed the bill. It seems like ever
3 since they put both of the utilities together and
4 they stopped sending folks out for meter readings,
5 this is where and when the rates started hiking
6 and started going up.

7 With that being said, my bill was
8 brought down to \$670 after a second shutoff and
9 after a hike and asking for \$600. So within less
10 than six weeks, We Energies has collected \$1,200
11 not including that they also asked for a \$31
12 connection fee additional.

13 So I'm trying to figure out if I
14 paid on the 7th, why, by September 19th, I have
15 another disconnection notice also stating that
16 they wanted -- let's see here -- they wanted a
17 \$633.55 payment or I have to pay the past due
18 amount or I have to commit, I believe, to a \$380
19 payment.

20 With that being said, how did this
21 bill get to be generated in less than 30 days
22 within a billing cycle? So you mean to tell me in
23 less than 60 days, they want to cut me off and
24 disconnect me? And they're asking for these
25 larger sums of money, and we're already being

1 doubled down due to the circumstances that I had
2 nothing to do with?

3 And I am actually -- I'm outraged
4 because I am here fighting for folks that are
5 currently having and experiencing these same
6 issues, but they have children, they have
7 disabilities, they have -- there's older people,
8 there's folks that have health issues, that's on
9 oxygen. You know, I just don't understand where's
10 the communication and how are they shutting people
11 off back to back without a 30-day billing cycle
12 and why is it that we can't -- I haven't been able
13 to reach anybody. There's an automated prompt
14 that tells you that you need to choose or pick
15 this or that.

16 And currently, I am in a
17 situation, because I just transitioned to a new
18 job, to where I don't have the means or the access
19 to this type of money to pay these outrageous
20 prices, keep in mind they add an extra \$182,
21 saying that those were my current charges. So
22 you're telling me that -- when were my current
23 charges? From what date to what date? And
24 shouldn't those charges be the regular charges?
25 Like, I don't understand.

1 But what I do know is that I been
2 in contact with a lot of people that have had a
3 lot of issues and a lot of problems with
4 We Energies and asking for, you know, these large
5 sums and threatening to cut folks off.

6 And I don't know. Like, you know,
7 you have some folks who can get in the program,
8 but I think it also comes down to income limits.
9 And so, you know, as far as them saying that
10 they're moving towards clean energy, well, honey,
11 I'm just here to let you know, they're still
12 burning coal and fossil fuel over in the Oak Creek
13 facility where they were supposed to close down.
14 Okay?

15 And so by them still using and
16 burning that type of energy to give off
17 electricity for the state and the City of
18 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, it's disproportionately
19 affecting black and Latino families as well
20 because that smog and fog is coming straight
21 here.

22 So there are health issues,
23 health disparities, this is why we're contracting
24 a lot of asthma, breathing issues, bronchitis,
25 lung cancer. Those are contributing factors to

1 that. You know, they're not moving. They want to
2 keep saying that this is what they're doing, but
3 they keep putting it off, and they just pushed it
4 back.

5 And I don't think that us, as
6 ratepayers, should have to pay for these
7 stakeholders with all these billions of dollars to
8 move in efforts to clean energy. Might I remind
9 you, the State of Wisconsin is behind with moving
10 towards clean energy through our electric company.
11 So yeah, I'm pretty outraged here, and I'd be
12 talking forever.

13 I am here to say no to raising
14 rates and spiking rates because that's gonna
15 affect the bill besides the percentage. It's
16 going to look like an increase of at least 5 or \$6
17 from every one of us.

18 Now, everyone that's here including
19 myself, I can speak for myself, cannot afford
20 that; and I do have a decent paying job, but that
21 is at least 10 percent of my income going towards
22 one bill and then them raising rates and saying
23 well -- and my bill, might I mind you, was
24 never -- it was like a little over \$1,000. But
25 once you give them the 600, that's only 600.

1 And then, like I said, they're
2 spiking the rates. So then it goes back to the
3 800, and then now it's going to be 12 or 1500.
4 They're putting folks back in the same exact
5 predicament that -- you know, that areas of life,
6 and they're trying to move forward. What it did
7 to me was only pushed me back from not having
8 employment, and so by me not having employment, I
9 had to make a choice.

10 Nobody should have to make a
11 choice -- and I'm going to close out with this --
12 whether to feed your family, whether to pay your
13 mortgage or pay your rent or figure out how to
14 feed the dog for that case, because I'm an animal
15 lover and I have a bird as well -- but, you know,
16 nobody should have to figure out if they should
17 have to not pay one bill because another bill is
18 putting so much stress on them, and that is a main
19 thing. Lights and gas is a necessity, and it's
20 getting cold. So you can't be cold and be in the
21 dark. Thank you.

22 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Thanks very
23 much. Really appreciate that.

24 Let's take another person. It
25 looks like Maletha, M-a-l-e-t-h-a?

1 MS. JONES: Hi. How are you?

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Gotcha there.

3 Excellent. Can you turn your video -- ah there,
4 perfect.

5 All right. Great. I'm going to
6 swear you in, and give us your full name and then
7 your comment, please.

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 MALETHA JONES, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MS. JONES: My name is Maletha Jones,
4 and I have a comment something similar to Keviea.

5 So a couple of months ago, my
6 husband had went to make a payment on the We
7 Energies bill just to get back to the house an
8 hour later and the lights was cut off; and he give
9 them a call to let them know that he has a sick
10 mother in the house that's on oxygen. So they
11 gave him the --

12 EXAMINER NEWMARK: You were on mute for
13 a second there. Can we just go back to when -- I
14 think your husband got back to the house?

15 (Record read.)

16 MS. JONES: So they gave him a medical
17 paper release that he had to fill out stating that
18 she was on oxygen and that they would turn the
19 lights back on.

20 He done that, thinking that they
21 were gonna restore the lights, and leave and go to
22 work, come back four hours later, and my mom was
23 still without the oxygen. In that matter, thank
24 God that she had a portable one that was already
25 charged that she had to sit here in the dark for

1 those hours.

2 So once we got home from work, we
3 called We Energies back and let them know that the
4 power had not been restored, and then that's when
5 they told us as well that they will restore the
6 power, and then we had to pay \$600, which our bill
7 at that time was a thousand. So we paid the \$600.
8 And then they put him on a payment plan which
9 would cover the balance, which was \$117 within the
10 four to six months, plus the next monthly bill.

11 And so on the day that he had to
12 make the payment, he went and made the payment --
13 well, he went and got a money order and sent the
14 payment in along with an additional \$50 that was
15 supposed to go towards the next month's bill
16 because at that time that's what all that he could
17 afford.

18 So then a month later, he gets
19 another letter stating that he was facing
20 another disconnection. So I mean, like how
21 could that be when we just sent you these --
22 this \$600, then an additional \$117 plus the 50.
23 They told him that because that payment came in
24 late, that it just basically took him out the
25 system which I believe that that is something

1 that they need to fix because these rates are
2 already ridiculous.

3 So now we are in the process of
4 getting the electricity shut off again or, you
5 know, make these payments. So now we at a point
6 that we have to pay Peter -- we had to rob Paul to
7 pay Peter; and that shouldn't be, especially if
8 they're on a fixed income.

9 They already can barely make the
10 payments because I believe that the bill is over
11 almost \$400 a month, and that's like paying rent.
12 And if you on a fixed income, ain't no way that
13 you can pay your rent and pay these high bills and
14 live like you supposed to.

15 So I believe that they needs to fix
16 these rate increases or change they policies so
17 that our black and brown people in our poverty
18 communities can be able to afford electricity and
19 gas and not have to worry about being in the dark
20 to get they bills paid. Thank you.

21 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Great. Thank
22 you. I'll note that we got your comment.

23 And next on the list is Patrick
24 Stoffel. Okay. Great. Raise your right hand.

25

1 PATRICK STOFFEL, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Give us your name and
3 your comment.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MR. STOFFEL: You bet. My name's
6 Patrick Stoffel.

7 My comment is as far as -- I'm
8 wondering with this rate increase, did We
9 Energies -- did they prepare -- did they
10 anticipate this need to transition to green
11 energy?

12 The evidence of this needing the --
13 the harmful effects of carbon energy and the need
14 to shift to non-carbon energy has been around
15 since the '70s or '80s for sure, you know, 40 or
16 50 years.

17 So unless We Energies CEOs get
18 their news directly from the Koch brothers or Fox
19 News, they must have been aware of the climate
20 change and the need to transition to green energy.
21 So why haven't they prepped for this? Why hasn't
22 their business model already budgeted for
23 something like this.

24 And it looks like, from what I've
25 heard, record earnings in 2021 and '22, and

1 shareholders profits are going up. Solar is the
2 cheapest form of energy now. With all the
3 innovations and everything, solar is now the
4 cheapest form of energy, and yet rate increases
5 are being proposed; and the reason given is that
6 the business forgot or ignored to prepare for this
7 transition, and the poor and -- the poor are going
8 to bear the burden of these increases.

9 I bought panels for my roof, solar
10 panels, because I prepared. I knew this was
11 coming as far as we need solar energy and to move
12 away from carbon. I mean, I'm Joe Blow from
13 Mazomanie and I knew this. So how do the CEOs of
14 We Energies not know that? I mean, they got the
15 bonuses. They probably should have known it.

16 So another thing as well is please
17 stop funding fossil fuel infrastructure and
18 upgrades and stop investing in fossil fuels. I'm
19 60. I'm going to croak 20, 30 years, but children
20 and people that are young now in five, ten, 20
21 years, this earth is going to be not good, and
22 climate change is going to be a lot worse; and the
23 children and poor are going to face those burdens
24 in the future.

25 Let's stop making it much worse for

1 them. Let's invest in clean. Let's prepare ahead
2 of time. Don't be, you know, just, oh, we got an
3 increase now, I guess. It looks like, oh, my God,
4 we gotta do solar now. No. We knew this ahead of
5 time.

6 Anyway, thanks for letting me
7 share.

8 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Great.
9 Thanks for commenting.

10 All right. We're getting down to
11 our list here. I see Klaus Mylotta, I'm assuming
12 that's our PSC employee, one of the witnesses in
13 the case. I'll note that.

14 And Susan Bence, B-e-n-c-e, do you
15 wish to comment?

16 MS. BENCE: No, I do not. Thanks.

17 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Next we have Walnut
18 Way guest. So is that someone, a member of the
19 public, and does that person wish to comment. I'm
20 not getting an answer.

21 We do have a phone number one
22 person calling in. It's -- it looks like your
23 number ends in 854, and you need to press star 6
24 if you want to unmute. I'm just going to send you
25 a message there in case you didn't hear me. So if

1 you want to unmute, star 6.

2 Otherwise, checking our list here.

3 So we have everyone accounted for. I'm going to
4 go through and provide one more opportunity for
5 people who did not make a comment if they wish to
6 do so now. That was iPad and Karl, for example.

7 No? All right. Well, that's all
8 we have for participants, members of the public
9 who wish to make a comment. So we're coming to
10 the end of this session, and we will be back at
11 6:00 p.m. and be sure that we can take your
12 comment at that time, and don't forget written
13 comments will be available --

14 MR. MAH: Judge Newmark?

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Yeah.

16 MR. MAH: The Walnut Way guest folks
17 have turned on their cameras. I wasn't sure if
18 they wanted to talk.

19 EXAMINER NEWMARK: I would expect they
20 would unmute their mic and let me know.

21 So we have today's session. We
22 have the 6:00 p.m. session coming up, the party
23 session and --

24 MR. HANSON: I would like to talk.

25 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Oh, iPad. All right.

1 I'm glad I kept this going a little bit longer.
2 So I saw you had video. You can turn that back
3 on.

4 Let's do our routine here. I'll
5 swear you in and just give us your full name and
6 then your comments. So raise your right hand.

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 GRANT HANSON, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: And your name,
3 please?

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MR. HANSON: My name is Grant Hansen,
6 and it's spelled with an -o-n.

7 Like I say, I'm new to this. So I
8 was just listening at first, but after hearing
9 some of the comments, some of my concern -- you
10 know, I don't want to make this racist, but it's
11 not only black people and inner city people that
12 are struggling with fixed incomes and disability.

13 I'm very much against this rate
14 hike because it seems like my facility charges
15 keep going up, and it's for them -- you know, the
16 facility charges, it seems like they don't even
17 have to have a hearing on it. I don't know how it
18 works exactly.

19 But it continues to go up, and then
20 now they want to rate charge them; and for us on
21 disability and fixed incomes, we're already
22 struggling with getting to doctors' appointments
23 because of the gas price. Food, it's just, you
24 know, more inflation in every turn that we make in
25 our lives.

1 And then to have a rate hike hit us
2 when we know we're going into the winter season
3 just -- it seems like it's just piling onto us,
4 where it's very stressful; and you have anxiety
5 because you're -- like some of the other people
6 made the comments, you know, you're starting to
7 make choices. Do I eat healthy? Do I rob Peter
8 to pay Paul, one said.

9 Some of the other comments that the
10 people were more prepared, you know, and had
11 written comments in front of them had statistics
12 and everything where, you know, shareholders are
13 making money, CEOs are getting bonuses.

14 You know, let's keep the people
15 that are using these utilities in mind because
16 it's not like we sit here and can shop around for
17 where we get it. It is given to us. Okay. You
18 are an energy co-op customer, you are an Excel
19 Energy customer or you're this gas customer.

20 You can't like -- you can live --
21 any other thing in your life, you can shop for
22 different insurance to get a better rate. You can
23 shop different grocery stores and use coupons to
24 get better food prices. With utilities, you have
25 no choices. You are locked into these companies,

1 and it's like it is dictated to you, you're going
2 to use this company, and this is what you're going
3 to pay.

4 So I am totally against rate
5 increases, especially this time of year. The
6 timing of this is just -- I can't imagine how
7 these executives can come up and decide to do it
8 this time of year. I'm sorry if I'm rambling, but
9 like I said, I'm new to this, and I definitely am
10 against any rate increases.

11 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Thanks for your
12 comment. I'm glad you got a chance to make it;
13 and first time, but not the last time, I hope.

14 So we did have a little bit more
15 time here. So I will just open this up to the
16 other people who haven't spoken.

17 So Karl, did you want to make a
18 comment? Haven't heard from you.

19 KARL: Sorry. I didn't unmute the first
20 time around. But no, I have no comment today.

21 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. So Walnut Way,
22 do those people wish to speak? They're speaking
23 on their individual behalfs. No? Okay.

24 WALNUT WAY PARTICIPANT: Yes. Thank
25 you. Someone here would like to share their

1 testimony.

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So we want to be
3 clear. I just want to make sure we're not
4 confusing the process here that Walnut Way --
5 there's an entity called Walnut Way that's a party
6 in the case, but the people present at this
7 hearing are speaking on their own individual
8 behalf; is that correct?

9 WALNUT WAY PARTICIPANT: Yes.

10 MS. SMITH: Yes.

11 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. So who is
12 going to be speaking? I just want to see if we
13 can see that person.

14 MS. SMITH: Hi.

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So there would be no
16 way to get that camera like focused on the speaker
17 over there.

18 I'll swear you in, ask your name,
19 and you can give your comment. So let's get
20 started. Raise your right hand.

21

22

23

24

25

1 SHANEKA SMITH, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Give us your name,
3 please.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MS. SMITH: My name is Shaneka Smith,
6 and I am a resident of Lindsay Heights. I
7 actually just moved here in November, and I bought
8 a home.

9 And so when I actually got the
10 bill, the bill was actually in good standing, but
11 as I -- because I been here almost a year now --
12 it has went up and went up, and I keep calling
13 them, I'm like, why is it going up; and I'm also
14 on the budget as well. So then they would send me
15 a bill, like, you need to pay this; and I'm like,
16 I don't have this to pay.

17 So it's almost put me in fear when
18 I heard that you guys were gonna -- that they were
19 gonna raise the rates and so -- and then just also
20 listening. It just sounds like it's a whole bunch
21 of fear that got released with this rate increase.

22 And I just want to put out there
23 that everyone right now is saying they want for
24 people to rise up, families to rise up; but it's
25 almost like we can't rise up because as we're

1 trying to rise up, our families to rise up, it's
2 like more things are coming to put us down in this
3 place of staying where you are, and it's hard to
4 advance.

5 Even if you got a new home or you
6 got a new apartment, it's almost like you can't
7 really enjoy it because now you got more that came
8 on you about it to pay the bill for We Energies.
9 Then they want to go up, so it's even more like,
10 oh, my God, how can I even live a good life if all
11 this stuff just keeps on going up?

12 And I'm trying to also go up, and
13 my children are trying to go up because I'm a
14 single mom. So, you know, it just makes me think
15 about the agenda that is put out also with this
16 rate increase.

17 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Is that it?

18 MS. SMITH: Yes.

19 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Well, thanks very
20 much.

21 MS. SMITH: Thank you.

22 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So at this point, do
23 we have all the comments we're looking for today?

24 All right. Like I mentioned
25 before, we will be back at 6:00 p.m. We'll take

1 new comments at that time; and as well, in terms
2 of public comments, we'll be in Milwaukee on
3 November 3rd, and we'll accept written comments up
4 until November 7.

5 So at this point, we stand
6 adjourned until 6:00. Thanks very much, everyone,
7 for participating and giving your comments and
8 listening in. I really appreciate the
9 participation.

10 (Hearing adjourned until 6:00 p.m.)

11

12 *****

13 6:00 p.m.

14 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Let's get on the
15 record. And I want to welcome all of you this
16 evening to Docket 5-UR-110, the Joint Application
17 of Wisconsin Electric Power Company and Wisconsin
18 Gas for Authority to Adjust Electric, Natural Gas
19 and Steam Rates.

20 My name is Michael Newmark, the
21 Administrative Law Judge for the PSC. We're
22 connected through Zoom. We have utility
23 personnel, Commission Staff and members of the
24 public connected, and we are taking public
25 comments today as part of your public hearing

1 process.

2 It's the second session of what
3 will end up being four sessions in the end. So we
4 had an afternoon session with live comments.
5 We'll do the same right now. We're also accepting
6 written comments through the Commission's website
7 and by U.S. Mail, and I'm just going to switch the
8 notice on the screen here to our -- Notice of
9 Hearing second displays the new comment date of
10 November 7th. So you can file comments in writing
11 through the Commission's website and by U.S. Mail.

12 Let's go off the record for a
13 second.

14 (Discussion off the record.)

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: We also will be
16 meeting live in person November 3rd at 2:00 p.m.
17 and 6:00 p.m. at the Washington Park Senior Center
18 for an additional two sessions for the public.

19 Also, don't forget to meet us back
20 here on Zoom Wednesday, October 5th, at 10:00 a.m.
21 where we'll take evidence from the parties and
22 Commission Staff. So at this point, I think we
23 have gotten everything established here.

24 I'm just going to give you a brief
25 introduction to our process for those of you who

1 haven't joined us in the afternoon. There may be
2 a few of you here. So we're taking public
3 comment, and we have a transcriptionist here who
4 will record what you say, and your comment will be
5 part of the hearing transcript and it will be
6 provided to the commissioners, the three
7 commissioners that'll decide the issues in the
8 case.

9 So they'll review your comments
10 along with all the other evidence in the case; and
11 in open meeting, they'll vote on the issues and
12 decide in favor or against the application, the
13 different aspects of the application. In
14 addition, they'll get the written comments as
15 well. That'll be part of the record that they
16 review.

17 So some ground rules about making a
18 comment. Just so you know, so you're speaking to
19 the commissioners and if you -- we want to be able
20 to transcribe what you say, so please talk slowly
21 and clearly; and we'll try to make sure we can
22 hear you through Zoom appropriately, make sure
23 that connection's working.

24 So what I'll do, I mentioned it
25 before, but I'll call the names of the people that

1 I recognize as not being connected to a party or
2 Commission Staff, and I'll get your name and also
3 swear you in and then have you give your comment.
4 So it's pretty simple, and basically we want your
5 opinion on the case, just taking as many comments
6 as we can.

7 So it looks look our first person
8 on the list here, and I'm just going by the order
9 that Zoom gives me here on my participant list so
10 it's kind of random. But we'll start with
11 Janet -- it looks like Weyker, W-e-y-k-e-r.

12 MS. WEYKER: Yes, that's me.

13 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Let me just make sure
14 I can hear you okay. First I want to swear you
15 in. So please raise your right hand.

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 JANET WEYKER, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. So just
3 give your name for the record and give us your
4 comment.

5 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

6 MS. WEYKER: All right. Thank you for
7 this opportunity.

8 Yes. I am Janet Weyker, and I live
9 in Racine, Wisconsin, and what I'm really asking
10 for the Public Service Commission is to deny that
11 full rate increase that's being asked for by
12 We Energies.

13 I'm a member of the Racine
14 Dominican Sisters, and we are very concerned about
15 environmental justice issues, and I feel that this
16 rate case is a justice issue, especially for those
17 who are bearing the burden of a rate increase.

18 As a near monopoly that boasts a
19 very high rate of return for its shareholders and
20 as a company that rewards its CEOs with huge
21 salaries, seeking an increase of 4 or 8.4 percent
22 in electricity revenue and a 10.7 gas revenue
23 increase, that appears to be very excessive.

24 Those rates pose an extreme burden,
25 especially to the people of black and Latino

1 communities in Milwaukee who would have to pay
2 nearly twice as much of their annual income for
3 energy costs than other people.

4 Overall, I ask that the percentage
5 of increase be lowered and that We Energies work
6 with the people who bear the greatest energy
7 burden to devise a more equitable plan to cover
8 the cost of energy.

9 I would like We Energies to invest
10 more funds and time into energy efficiency and
11 weatherization programs. Thank you.

12 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Thank you very
13 much. I'm just going to note that you made a
14 comment.

15 Okay. Next on our list is Penny
16 Gutekunst.

17 MS. GUTEKUNST: That's me.

18 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Would you like to
19 comment?

20 MS. GUTEKUNST: I would love to.

21 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Great.
22 I'll swear you in. Raise your right hand.

23

24

25

1 PENNY GUTEKUNST, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So give us your name

3 for the record and go ahead with your comment.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MS. GUTEKUNST: My name is Penny

6 Gutekunst, and I am the vice president of

7 development for the Zoological Society; and we are

8 the nonprofit charity partner for the Milwaukee

9 County Zoo.

10 I've been in development work for

11 over 25 years, and I am here to say that

12 We Energies and the We Energies Foundation are

13 simply amazing corporate partners. They have set

14 an example that others should follow. I can say

15 without hesitation that they are a leader of

16 philanthropy within our community.

17 And to demonstrate what a terrific

18 partner they are, just two weeks ago, literally

19 two weeks ago, we had our annual Celebrating You

20 in the Zoo event, which is an event that we hold

21 that celebrates our most supportive and loyal

22 donors; and we don't hand out many awards at that

23 event, but we did hand out one to We Energies.

24 They were one of only three awardees that we

25 honored at that event.

1 They received an award with a fancy
2 name of Loxodonta Africana, which we give to an
3 organization that has shown exemplary support and
4 a commitment to our mission; in other words, this
5 award is given to one of our top corporate
6 partners.

7 Remarkably, We Energies has been an
8 outstanding partner of ours for the zoo and the
9 society for over 25 years. They've given to many,
10 many different efforts that we've had out at the
11 zoo and the society, including education programs,
12 a new green roof on the top of our education
13 building. They've participated in Beastie Safari,
14 supported zoo ball, our birdies and eagles golf
15 outing, if I only mention a few.

16 I have to mention that in the late
17 1900s and 2000s they served as a presenting
18 sponsor for a very popular holiday night lights.
19 Since I joined the society eight and a half years
20 ago, everybody kept asking when are they bringing
21 that back.

22 Well, last year I'm pleased to say
23 that the zoo decided to bring back the holiday
24 lights, and the show was very successful, and it's
25 called Wild Lights; and I'm pleased to say that

1 We Energies has stepped up to the plate to be the
2 presenting sponsor not only last year, but this
3 year once again. So I encourage everybody on this
4 call to come out to the zoo in December and see
5 the beautiful lights; and we'll be thankful, in a
6 large part, to We Energies for helping make that
7 possible.

8 I would be remiss if I didn't talk
9 about some of their most -- more recent very
10 philanthropic giving by not only the company, but
11 the foundation. We are embarking on a project at
12 the zoo called Adventure Africa that will
13 reimagine 25 percent of the developed footprint of
14 the zoo. It's the largest transformation for the
15 zoo, for your zoo, since 1959.

16 And We Energies helped us get this
17 started with a very generous gift of \$750,000 back
18 in 2017 for the first phase of Adventure Africa;
19 and they recently made an additional \$500,000 gift
20 to help us complete that transformation, bringing
21 their total contribution to \$1.25 million.

22 I cannot thank We Energies enough
23 for their extraordinary support; and if that's not
24 enough, their corporate leaders, many of their
25 senior leaders have stepped up to the plate and

1 been engaged on our board of directors. They've
2 helped provide guidance to help us and helped us
3 support our mission.

4 We Energies is an amazing corporate
5 citizen. They put their energy, pun intended,
6 into making Milwaukee and our surrounding
7 communities a better place to live, work and play.

8 That concludes my comment.

9 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Thank you very
10 much. I'm going to note that you commented here.

11 I think our next speaker on our
12 list is Elizabeth Ward. Would you like to speak?

13 MS. WARD: No, thank you. Just
14 listening.

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. How about Jim
16 Piatt -- did you speak in the afternoon session?

17 MR. PIATT: I did. And if that suffices
18 then I don't -- I wouldn't need to repeat that
19 unless you want me to.

20 EXAMINER NEWMARK: No. That's okay. We
21 got your comment, and it will go to the
22 Commission.

23 MR. PIATT: Thank you.

24 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Yes.

25 Next, we have Walnut Way guest. Do

1 we have someone from the group who wishes to
2 speak? Not hearing you yet.

3 MS. CURRY: Hello?

4 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So who do we have
5 that's going to speak?

6 MS. CURRY: My name is Ramona Curry. I
7 am a resident here in Lindsay Heights. I
8 represent the Lindsay Heights resident-led group
9 out of Walnut Way. I'm glad to have followed
10 Penny for all of that --

11 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So we do have a
12 little technical glitch with you giving a
13 comment at this time, and that's because Walnut
14 Way is a party in the case. So I can have you
15 give a comment as a -- in your own independent
16 capacity --

17 MS. CURRY: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

18 EXAMINER NEWMARK: -- your own opinion.

19 MS. CURRY: As a resident?

20 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Yes, just as a
21 resident, not giving the position of the
22 organization.

23 MS. CURRY: Okay.

24 EXAMINER NEWMARK: I'll swear you in and
25 get your name, and if you just make that clear for

1 us before you give your comment. Just a technical
2 glitch. We want to make sure we do this
3 correctly.

4 All right. So first let me swear
5 you in. So raise your right hand.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 RAMONA CURRY, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: So give us your name,
3 please.

4 MS. CURRY: My name is Ramona Curry. I
5 am a resident of Lindsay Heights.

6 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Go ahead.

7 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

8 MS. CURRY: All right. I'm ecstatic to
9 follow Penny because she gave a lot of information
10 regarding what We Energies contributed to those
11 organizations.

12 I'm here to represent against the
13 price hike because of the zip codes that are being
14 targeted. The median income that I'm aware of is
15 at least \$24,000 per year of annual salary, and
16 that would greatly affect the residents of these
17 neighborhoods, the 05, 06, 08, 10, 12, all of
18 them.

19 Those neighborhoods predominantly
20 have fixed incomes already; and if you spike those
21 We Energies price hikes up according to -- you
22 know, with the gases and the electric, that would
23 be just too much. That would be a burden on all
24 of the residents that are on fixed incomes and do
25 not have the funds or the money available for them

1 to keep their power bills on. So that would
2 greatly affect.

3 So most of the people that are
4 here, I have -- the Lindsay Heights neighborhood
5 that I live in, I have family that's been here for
6 the last 30 years.

7 I recently came back to this
8 neighborhood almost two years ago. We have over
9 200 relatives that live in this neighborhood
10 alone, and I know their means of income and what
11 their income limits are; and they would have to
12 choose between feeding their children and clothing
13 them and housing them or paying their We Energies
14 bills. So I'm against it, and I'm against it --
15 and I'm here to represent the residents because
16 that would not be beneficial for us.

17 And I would certainly encourage all
18 of those -- that money that you're pouring into
19 the zoo and other places like that, that
20 \$1.25 million, we would greatly benefit from that
21 in our neighborhood so that we can have a
22 transformation here as well, so that we can focus
23 on the health and wellness of our young children,
24 our adults and everybody that lives in this
25 neighborhood so we can have a thriving

1 neighborhood that we can walk in, we can go
2 outside without worry, we can focus on the
3 beautification or having -- my goal -- my vision
4 to see in this neighborhood is to be able to walk
5 outside without fear, without garbage, without
6 seeing poverty all over the place.

7 And if you do the price hikes, that
8 would just deepen -- push us further and further
9 deep into an area of poverty that we do not want
10 to be in; and if we can get some of that money
11 invested into our community and to build us up,
12 right.

13 And then we can certainly pay for
14 those amenities that we can enjoy in Milwaukee
15 County too, like such as the museums, the zoos,
16 all of those areas that maybe we can enjoy so that
17 we can benefit culturally of the great city of
18 Milwaukee. Thank you.

19 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Just had one question
20 for you. I just wanted to make sure when you gave
21 your comment, you were giving it on your own
22 individual behalf and not on behalf of an
23 organization.

24 MS. CURRY: That was my own individual
25 statement.

1 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Great. And I
2 just want to go off the record.

3 (Discussion off the record.)

4 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Let's begin. So
5 raise your right hand.

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 TRASUS WRIGHT, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN
2 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

3 MR. WRIGHT: Hi. My name is Trasus
4 Wright. That's spelled T-r-a-s-u-s, W-r-i-g-h-t.
5 I'm a resident of Lindsay Heights.

6 My concern is that we are an eco --
7 an eco neighborhood, and we have -- just an
8 example, we have given out a hundred rain barrels
9 that residents have in the neighborhood. We have
10 rain gardens. We do walking in the neighborhood.
11 We just finished our 90-day health and wellness
12 challenge where we have folks out walking in the
13 neighborhood.

14 Mind you now, we are still burdened
15 with reckless driving, drug selling, shootings,
16 all of the negative things and, you know, people
17 getting killed. We have trees where people have
18 made memorials out of the trees.

19 So we are kind of a -- we are a
20 neighborhood of -- almost similar to, like, a Tale
21 of Two Cities. So we have homeowners that try to
22 do something positive, and then we have people
23 that are encamping in our neighborhood to sell
24 drugs and create the violence and the mayhem.

25 So on our Harvest Day Festival --

1 we had a wonderful Harvest Day Festival, and we
2 had a bunch of people out at the Marketplace, but
3 then on 17th and Meinecke, we had some people that
4 don't live in the neighborhood, they were having a
5 party, but they sell the drugs in the area.

6 They had a party, and people call
7 the police; and police said, Well, it's not a
8 problem unless somebody shooting and whatever, but
9 they were there till 3:30. And I can't see that
10 in Bay View, I can't see that in Riverwest, I
11 can't see it in Mequon, I can't see that in any
12 other neighborhood.

13 We are in Milwaukee in Wisconsin in
14 the country of the United States. Why is the
15 service different? So as far as We Energies,
16 we're saying that we don't want an energy burden.
17 We don't want to be burdened. We shouldn't pay
18 more than 6 percent of our income for energy.

19 You do have that LIFT program where
20 you assist people who are low income or, you know,
21 under-disadvantaged, but then there's a lot of
22 homeowners, a lot of elderly people that don't
23 necessarily qualify for that.

24 So what we're saying is -- what we
25 want to do in our neighborhood is we want to

1 continue the positive things, and we want to see
2 where we can work with the Public Service
3 Commission and We Energies, and we're saying that
4 we're a neighborhood that's in transformation.
5 We're doing positive things.

6 And we're saying that imagine --
7 and I asked other residents, I say, What would our
8 neighborhood look like if we had a \$50 million
9 investment? And people start dreaming and
10 thinking about it, and what we're saying is, is
11 that if we took -- if you came in our neighborhood
12 and you looked at all the roofs and you said, What
13 else can you do with a roof? Well, you can put
14 some solar panels on that roof, and you don't have
15 to locate that solar panel out in some farmland
16 that's far from us; and you using up green space
17 that you could plant trees or whatever. So you
18 could put the solar panels on the roof.

19 If you put the solar panels on the
20 roof, we may be able to have a situation where we
21 could demonstrate to We Energies and the Public
22 Service Commission that everybody with solar
23 panels would never get their energy cut off.

24 That would be a wonderful world
25 where they wouldn't be disconnected, they wouldn't

1 have to apply for the low-income money that people
2 set aside because their energy is too high. They
3 would be -- and they wouldn't get -- you guys got
4 the moratorium, but we also say you need that
5 moratorium in the summer because you got a lot of
6 senior citizens who need -- who on dialysis, who
7 need air conditioning, who need central air. And
8 then people have to go and fill out so many
9 different pieces of paperwork. They have to jump
10 through so many hoops to find out sometimes you
11 just a little bit over income, and you don't
12 qualify. And so we're saying that we can remove
13 those barriers.

14 And then in that situation, you
15 create some unintended consequences that are
16 positive. So now people have more income. We
17 have less coal coming from West Virginia. We also
18 have power going back to We Energies, and maybe
19 We Energies could send those residents a check.
20 So now a low-income person is getting \$200 from
21 We Energies every month versus sending that.

22 So what would that do to that
23 person? So then they're not paying 6 percent of
24 their income. So maybe they can send their kids
25 to a summer camp, maybe they could afford to get a

1 zoo membership, maybe they could get a membership
2 to the Cudahy Science Museum on the lake, maybe
3 they could get a bicycle, and they ride to the
4 lake. So there are some things that could
5 actually happen.

6 And then what takes place -- and
7 we're willing to do this in our neighborhood -- we
8 would be a demonstration neighborhood where, with
9 all the negative indicators, because it's not
10 really good to do something in a well -- affluent
11 neighborhood because they're not having the
12 reckless driving, they don't have the guns
13 shooting. So you want to do this in one of the
14 toughest neighborhoods. We are in 05 and 06.

15 So we would be able to create a
16 model for We Energies, the public rate, and other
17 residents to say these things are possible, and we
18 all can contribute. So then the quality of life
19 in our city changes, the reckless driving stop,
20 you don't have the shooting on Water Street, you
21 don't have the shootings on Brady Street, you
22 don't have the shootings by the Bucks stadium.
23 Why? Because there's a group of people that are
24 benefiting, and they're civically involved.

25 And the other side about what

1 happens is that we are a neighborhood that's
2 civically engaged. We're in the process of
3 developing a NED, and we haven't received one red
4 penny from the NED, but we have residents donating
5 money to the NED because they see the value in
6 helping another neighbor fix their house up.

7 So we're looking to see if we can
8 partner with the Public Service Commission,
9 We Energies and create a model where we have
10 almost like a utopia in the midst of the chaos
11 that we're in right now, and we really don't have
12 an example.

13 We have a lot of wars going on, we
14 have a lot of -- we got the big hurricane on the
15 east, you know, but we don't have a -- we respond
16 to tragedies, but what if we respond to things
17 where we create prevention. Well, we're not
18 coming out because somebody died.

19 In fact, we may not even need as
20 many policing in our neighborhood if we're able to
21 get solar panels on every house in Lindsay Heights
22 because then people would be getting something,
23 and we say, Hey, look, you're getting something,
24 you need to be civically engaged in your
25 neighborhood in order to get it. So now there's a

1 carrot for them to get involved, and that helps
2 the work that we're doing in Lindsay Heights as
3 residents. Thank you.

4 EXAMINER NEWMARK: All right. Thanks
5 very much.

6 Anyone else in the Walnut Way guest
7 room? No. Okay. Well, we'll move on. I will
8 give a chance at the end if people change their
9 mind to give a new comment, someone new.

10 So let's move on. I think the next
11 person on the list -- we've had a couple join us.
12 We have Susan Bence?

13 MS. BENCE: And I'm just listening in.
14 Thanks.

15 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Just checking.
16 Thanks.

17 And we have also have -- I think it
18 could be -- is it Janet Weyker's other connection
19 possibly? This is a j-w-e-y-k-e-r --

20 MS. WEYKER: I just gave my comments
21 first.

22 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Yes. I have you
23 listed twice on my participant list. I just want
24 to make sure I'm not missing anyone who wants to
25 make an additional -- a new person for a comment.

1 No?

2 All right. So at this point, we
3 have everyone.

4 MS. PIERCE: I do want to make a comment.
5 Sorry. I didn't know you were finished going down
6 your list.

7 EXAMINER NEWMARK: It might have been
8 that Zoom pushed your name in a place -- it does
9 its own random sorting here. So let me just make
10 sure I indicate -- okay. We have no comment for
11 Susan. It's good that I just make a note.

12 Meghan Pierce. Great. Thanks for
13 chiming in there. So we'll take you next, and
14 I'll swear you in. So raise your right hand.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 MEGHAN PIERCE, PUBLIC WITNESS, DULY SWORN

2 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Give your name for
3 the record and your comment, please.

4 DIRECT TESTIMONIAL STATEMENT BY

5 MS. PIERCE: My name is Meghan Pierce.

6 I'm from Sauk City, Wisconsin, and I thank you for
7 your time today for hearing our comments.

8 This large rate increase

9 We Energies is requesting is to fund their coal
10 plants and new gas infrastructures, and it is
11 clear that rate increases actually dis-incentivize
12 customers to lower their power usage, and it
13 impacts minorities.

14 People on fixed incomes are
15 disproportionately affected as lower use customers
16 are saddled with more of the cost. Along with
17 this, We Energies is actively working to block
18 customers from installing solar panels which would
19 reduce the pressure on the energy system and
20 reduce carbon pollution.

21 As a housing case manager, I see
22 the firsthand effects of high energy burden and
23 the financial effects it has on people. According
24 to the analysis, Energy Burden in Milwaukee:
25 Study Reveals Major Disparities and Links to

1 Redlined Areas, the energy burden of households in
2 predominantly black, Hispanic and Latinx
3 neighborhoods is roughly double that of households
4 in predominantly white neighborhoods.

5 And as you have already heard
6 tonight from others, this is directly negatively
7 affecting the lives of many Wisconsinites. It's
8 affecting our health and our finances, and I
9 greatly appreciate the individual comments that we
10 just heard from Walnut Way.

11 We need to decrease racial
12 disparities and energy burden as well as
13 prioritize carbon reduction goals. This is the
14 time to push for change. We Energies needs to
15 reduce the proposed increase. They need to stop
16 doubling down on fossil fuels and embrace
17 sustainable, affordable clean energy.

18 They need to focus on creating a
19 program that targets the households with high
20 energy burden to provide energy efficiency and
21 weatherization programs. This will reduce energy
22 burden, reduce carbon emissions and save
23 ratepayers money.

24 The Wisconsin Environmental Justice
25 and Infrastructure Initiative is calling on

1 We Energies to do just this, to create a community
2 agreement to focus on solutions that will help the
3 most vulnerable ratepayers, including funding to
4 help energy burdened, low income and BIPOC
5 ratepayers lower and pay their energy bills.

6 So tonight I urge the PSC to focus
7 on this when making decisions on this rate case.
8 Use your platform to tell We Energies they cannot
9 unduly burden customers for their poor decisions
10 to continue operations of these fossil fuel
11 plants. Please deny this rate increase request.
12 Thank you.

13 EXAMINER NEWMARK: Okay. Thanks for
14 your comment. I'll note that you commented.

15 So I've gone through the list once
16 over here, and we've given everyone connected a
17 chance to speak. Anyone else that's connected
18 that wishes to make a comment that hasn't done so?

19 All right. So at this point, we'll
20 get ready to adjourn. I just wanted to note, like
21 I said before, we will be meeting October 5th for
22 evidence of the company and parties and Commission
23 Staff; and we'll also be attending the hearing in
24 Washington Park Senior Center November 3rd. And
25 just a reminder, again, written comments are due

1 Monday, November 7, through the Commission's
2 website or by U.S. Mail.

3 So at this point, thanks everyone
4 for attending and participating. We'll get these
5 comments off to the commissioners, and we'll
6 continue to proceed with the case, but I really
7 thank everyone for making their comments today and
8 wish you all a good night.

9 (The hearing concluded at 6:35 p.m.)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1 STATE OF WISCONSIN)

2 MILWAUKEE COUNTY)

3

4 I, DEBBIE A. HARNEN, Registered

5 Professional Reporter, with the firm of Halma Reporting

6 Group, Inc., 342 North Water Street, Milwaukee,

7 Wisconsin, do hereby certify that I reported the

8 foregoing proceedings had on September 28, 2022, and

9 that the same is true and correct in accordance with my

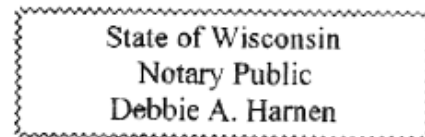
10 original machine shorthand notes taken at said time and

11 place.

12 Debbie A. Harnen

14 Debbie A. Harnen

15 Registered Professional Reporter



16

17

Dated this 29th day of September, 2022.

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25